

REMARKS

Claim 1 is amended to recite that the authentication apparatus is “positioned to isolate said first network from said second network, said authentication apparatus operable to perform authentication of authentication information received from said first interconnecting device and thereby” is operable to control whether communication between the “first network and said second network” is allowed.

Thus, when a user of a first network (e.g., PC 20a, 22a, 20b or 22b) tries to access a second network (e.g., network 50), the authentication apparatus controls access. In a case where the authentication by the authentication apparatus 40 is not successful, the authentication apparatus 40 does not permit the communication between the interconnecting device 10 and the network 50. This process is performed in accordance with the techniques disclosed in connection with Figure 5 and its accompanying description in the specification.

Initially, a first interconnecting device (e.g., 10a or 10b) acquires authentication information of a user from an external recording device (e.g., 15a or 15b). Next, the first interconnecting device (e.g., 10a or 10b) transmits the authentication information to an authentication apparatus (e.g., a second interconnecting device 40). Next, the authentication apparatus 40 receives the authentication information and performs authentication. Finally, the authentication apparatus 40 controls whether communication the first and second networks is allowed. Amended claim 1 requires that the authentication apparatus be “positioned to isolate said first network from said second network”, as shown in Figure 1.

The system of Fortenberry fails to disclose an authentication apparatus positioned to isolate a first network from a second network. Additionally, Fortenberry fails to disclose an authentication apparatus that does not permit the communication between the interconnecting device (e.g., user 208) and the network (e.g., 200).

Thus, amended claim 1 should be in a condition for allowance. Claims 2-3 are dependent upon claim 1 and therefore should also be in a condition for allowance. Independent claim 4 is amended to include the limitations added to claim 1. Therefore, claim 4 and its dependent claims 5-12 should also be in a condition for allowance. Similarly, independent claim 13 is amended to include limitations of the type added to claim 1. Therefore, claim 13 and its dependent claims 14-18 should also be in a condition for allowance.

In sum, all pending claims should now be in a condition for allowance. If there are any residual issues that need to be resolved prior to allowing the application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned.

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